

HISTORY REPEATED AS ATKINS HITS A LATE WINNER

By Argus
Wycombe Wanderers 2,
Maidstone 1

SOCCER history repeated itself at Loakes Park on Saturday, and the man responsible was Wycombe's far travelling right winger Dennis Atkins. In the opening game of the season Dennis wrecked Maidstone's Isthmian League debut by lobbing in a lucky late winner for the Wanderers. On Saturday, with the Kent men anticipating a point, that man Atkins popped up again, ten minutes from time, with yet another knock-out goal.

Little wonder that goalkeeper Danny Wiltshire and his co-defenders gave Dennis some old fashioned looks for this goal too was tinged with luck. Full-back John Simkins should have lashed the ball to safety before it reached Atkins—on the left wing of all places.

There was one huge sigh of relief as the ball nestled in the back of the Maidstone net for this was a terribly important goal for Wanderers. It means that for the "umpteenth" time this season they skip ahead of their Isthmian rivals in the League race.

CHANCES FLUFFED

Wycombe should never have been in the position of having to make a neck or nothing finish. Once again, crisp approach work was extravagantly wasted by the erratic shooting of the forwards. Bates, of all people, and Atkins, were astray with second half chances which should have given the Wanderers a three goals lead.

Indeed, the most likely Wycombe marksman seemed to be wing half Jimmy Truett, ever willing to try his luck with long range drives, and with far more accuracy than usual, Jimmy is no Wyatt Earp but he certainly packs a useful shot.

The Wycombe attack was as inconsistent as ever, good at times, moderate at others. Pick of the bunch was again Cliff Trott, a furnace of energy. Most improved player?—the accolade goes to Gerald Free, who was much happier than he was against Watford. His tendency to centre too near the goal-keeper spoilt some delightful approach work.

NOT QUICK ENOUGH

Making his League debut, rangy Ken Morris was thoughtful and industrious but, as yet, far from quick enough to escape first team tackling.

Maidstone, dashing led by Brian Myers, promised much without achieving anything. For all their speed, beef and apparent method their forwards failed to score a single goal, Wycombe's Ron Fryer helping out with the second best header of the match—an effort which, not surprisingly, caught Dennis Syrett on the hop.

This own-goal, in the 28th minute, cancelled out a marvellous goal by Paul Bates, seven minutes earlier. A real peach this one, a lush header swinging away into the roof of the net with spot-on precision after Free had crossed a superb ball over the Maidstone defence.

CONFIDENT DENNIS

Play had fluctuated rapidly until this point with both attacks building up pressure without being able to clinch a goal. It was good to see Dennis Syrett catching the ball in his old manner and there was no lack of confidence about the Wycombe defence this time.

Mainspring of many Wanderers attacks were wing halves Ron Fryer and Jimmy Truett. Rapid in the tackle, they made the middle of the field their own private hunting ground and never missed an opportunity to join in a goal probe.

Once Fryer had netted his "unstoppable", Wycombe pinned Maidstone in their penalty area and slogged away on both wings. Trott gave blond ex-international wing half Dennis Cutbush the "run around" and even if Atkins was still far from his peak, the Wanderers right wing posed trouble plus for the Kent visitors.

Bates was fantastically unlucky not to put Wanderers back in the lead when Simkins kicked away off the line with Wiltshire beaten. Maidstone had another "life" when Atkins shot narrowly past a post soon after the bedevilled, no-time-to-breathe Wiltshire had leapt at the last possible moment to tip Trott's long lob over the cross-bar.

BLAZED WIDE

Came the second half and a whirlwind of Wycombe attacks, but Maidstone were blessed with all the luck going. But there was no excuse for Dennis Atkins blazing wide of an open goal, when presented with a jewel of a pass from Bates, and equally no reason why Paul Bates should twice miss with the goalkeeper helpless in front of him.

Continuous attacks by Wycombe only piled on the agony as in-a-hurry Wanderers lashed the ball anywhere but into the net. Atkins was switched to the centre to seek more fruitful pastures but many Loakes Park fans had despaired of the two points before Dennis, the Maidstone hoodoo man, killed off visiting chances.